

NEWS



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FEDERAL JURY RETURNS GUILTY VERDICT ON FIREARMS AND DRUG CHARGES

Federal Jury Returns Guilty Verdict on Firearms and Drug Charges

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA - Jim Letten, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana; David Harper, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives(ATF); and Warren Riley, Superintendent, New Orleans Police Department, announced today that **TRENTON M. LAURANT**, of New Orleans, Louisiana, was convicted of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2); and of possession of marijuana, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 844(a).

LAURANT was charged with both of those crimes by a Federal Grand Jury on Thursday, August 25, 2005, only three days before Hurricane Katrina struck. In January 2006, **LAURANT**

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was arrested in Atlanta, but released from custody on a personal surety bond issued by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. He remained out of custody until this morning.

The gun charge carries a maximum penalty of ten (10) years of imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, three (3) years of supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. The marijuana charge carries a maximum penalty of one (1) year of imprisonment, a fine of \$100,000, one (1) year of supervised release, and a \$25 special assessment. Sentencing is scheduled to take place before the Honorable Eldon E. Fallon on April 18, 2007.

LAURANT had been arrested at approximately 12:30 a.m. on March 12, 2005, after being pulled over for Reckless Operation of a Motor Vehicle by officers of the New Orleans Police Department. Officers immediately detected the odor of marijuana and located approximately eight (8) grams of marijuana hidden in the vehicle's center console. Officers also located a Smith & Wesson, 9 mm, model SW9F pistol, fully loaded with 17 live rounds in the magazine and one live round in the chamber under **LAURANT**'s seat. **LAURANT** previously had been convicted in the Criminal District Court for the Parish of Orleans of Illegal Use of a Weapon in violation of Louisiana Revised Statute 14:94, and of Attempted Simple Burglary in violation of Louisiana Revised Statute 14:27/62.

Speaking to today's verdict, U. S. Attorney Jim Letten stated:

"First, on behalf of the entire U. S. Department of Justice, I want to thank NOPD Superintendent Warren Riley and the officers who made this federal conviction possible, along with the fine Special Agents of ATF who, in an outstanding partnership with NOPD, are working diligently to ensure that each day, more firearms violators are criminally charged in federal court. Our commitment to doing whatever it takes to disarm and punish potentially dangerous individuals, and to deter violent crime on our streets through aggressive federal enforcement, will continue as we implement new strategies to fight crime in the City."

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This case was investigated by Special Agents of ATF and Officers of the New Orleans Police Department. This matter was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher Cox and United States Department of Justice Attorney Sivashree Sundaram.

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